THE SOCIAL AND POLITICAL IDENTITIES OF THE SHI'I COMMUNITY IN LEBANON

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Abstract: Since the early days of the Shi'i presence in Lebanon, the Shi'i community has been considered the most marginalized and underprivileged community. This had been the case of the Shi'ites during the Mamluk period, the Ottoman period, the French mandate period, and again during the post-independence period. This article addresses the Shi'ite presence in Lebanon until the eve of Lebanese Civil War (1975). The article will explore the various aspects of socio-political identities of the Shi'ites and how that changed and developed during the Ottoman period, the French mandate, and the independence period by elaborating on the main actors and processes/phases that shaped this change. It has been argued that the marginalization and the neglect policies that were applied against the Shi'ites opened the wide doors for the Shi'i community to migrate to the urban cities in Lebanon (mainly Beirut) starting from the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, and this had also been expanded to the rest of the world (mainly America and West Africa). This migration played a key role in developing their contemporary social and political identities in which Musa al-Sadr and his movement played an important part.

Keywords: Shi'ites, identity, Jabal Amil, Lebanon

Introduction

The history of the Shi'ites in Lebanon tells us that, despite moving toward integration, they had traditionally been a community facing discrimination and persecution. Before Lebanon's political independence in 1943, the Shi'ites fought the Mamluks, the Ottomans, and lastly the French to protect their presence and secure their identity. Furthermore, the Shi'ites were affected directly by the creation of Greater Lebanon in 1920 through the attachment of their rural areas (the Beqa' and Jabal Amil) to the territory of Mount Lebanon. This territorial integration left the Shi'ites in the same zone of marginalization, which continued after Lebanese independence and was associated with the (re)emergence of their political identity through Musa al-Sadr. This article aims to discuss the Shi'ites and their social and political identity and its development until 1975.

In this article, I answer the following questions: How did Shi'ite identity develop (both socially and politically) throughout history? What were the main factors that

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influenced their identity? Who did the Shi'ites resist throughout their history in Lebanon? How did the presence of Musa al-Sadr (re)structure the Shi'i identity? I examine these questions by elaborating on the main actors and processes that affect the social and political path of the Shi'ites and their presence in Lebanon. I start this article with the origins of the Shi'ites in Lebanon and then discuss their situation during the Ottoman rule, the mandate, and the independence period, respectively. I will elaborate on these periods and explain how each of these influenced the Shi'ites and their identity. Finally, I will show how the presence of Musa al-Sadr influenced the Shi'ites and their identity and how this Shi'i identity was perceived at that time.

Origins of the Shi'ites in Lebanon

The presence of Shi'ism in Lebanon can be traced back to the earliest days when the Muslim community was divided between the Sunnis and the Shi'ites in the middle of the seventh century AD.[1] Currently, the Shi'ites are estimated to be the largest community in Lebanon.[2] Their population is concentrated in three geographical areas of modern Lebanon: primarily, the South or Jabal Amil, second, the Beqa', mainly the Baalback-Hermel region, and finally Beirut and its suburbs known as the "poverty Belts."[3]

The core of the Shi'i presence in Lebanon is Jabal Amil "which was named after *Amila*, a tribe of Yemen ... that migrated to al-Sham (geographic Syria) and settled near Damascus on the mountain that became known as Jabal Amil."[4] Moreover, the "*Amila* tribe was one of the Southern Arab tribes, mostly Christian, which immigrated in the sixth century from Yemen."[5] It is reported that the Abu Dharr al-Ghafari, the companion of the prophet Muhammad, was banished by the Caliph Mu'awiya Ibn Abi Sufyan from Syria and settled in the Jabal Amil region.[6] Accordingly,

> Al-Ghafari lived in Mays al-Jabal and in Sarafand, two villages in Southern Lebanon, moreover Jabal Amil was among the first regions to convert to Shi'a Islam; it is also argued that Shi'ism in Jabal Amil is older than in other regions, except al-Hijaz.[7]

When al-Ghafari settled in Jabal Amil, the region was already populated by the Christian Amili tribe.[8] This tribe converted to Shi'ism soon after the arrival of al-Ghafari.[9] Jabal Amil is regarded as part of Greater Syria and consists of more than 300 Lebanese Shi'i villages.

It is important to note that Shi'i tribes were spreading throughout Lebanon, especially in Kisrwan (the North of Lebanon), the Chouf (in Mount Lebanon), Jabal Amil (in South Lebanon), and the Beqa'. They had been in these areas before the arrival of Maronites from Syria in the eighth century.[10] Moreover, "during the

tenth and eleventh centuries, a Shi'i dynasty ruled in Tripoli, under the protection of Fatimid Cairo."[11] The Sunnis reacted against the Shi'ites starting from the twelfth century and "a strong state was created which included both Syria and Egypt, under the two successive dynasties, the Ayyubids and Mamluks Sunnism spread."[12] The Shi'ites of Northern Lebanon in Kisrwan, Jabal Akkar, and Jabal al-Dinniya came under Mamluk rule in 1292.[13] Kisrwan remained a distinctly Shi'ite region until the fourteenth century. However, the Shi'ite presence shrunk considerably in Jabal Akkar and al-Dinniya, as Shi'ite inhabitants were forced to convert to Sunnism (and to a lesser extent to the Maronite Christian faith), a way to protect themselves and their families, else they would have faced persecution and eviction out of that region.[14] Salibi notes that the Shi'ites of Kisrawan resisted the Mamluks for 13 years but were finally defeated in 1305.[15] By then, those Shi'ites were either massacred or evicted by the Mamluks, while the rest of the Shi'ite inhabitants fled to other Lebanese areas in Baalback, Jizzin, Jabal Amil, and to some areas near Beirut and Sidon.[16] In short, the Shi'ites concealed their sectarian identity for most of that time while they continued to practice their religion in a clandestine manner.

The Shi'ites during the Ottoman Period

The Ottomans gained their victory over the Mamluks in 1516 and took full control over the Levant through the Ottoman Empire. The Shi'ite position never improved during the Ottoman period. Instead, they were targeted through a variety of procedures and forced to pay high taxes to the Ottoman government. Since then (starting from 1516 and until the fall of the Ottoman Empire in 1918), the area of Jabal Amil was attached either to the governorate of Acre (*wilayat Acre*) or to the governorate of Damascus (*wilayat Dimashq*) or to the governorate of Haifa (*wilayat Haifa*). This change of governing the area of Jabal Amil destabilized the life of the local people. The Shi'ites were targeted and massacred by Ahmed Pasha "*al-Jazzar*" (the butcher), the governor of Acre, who killed and imprisoned the Shi'i *Ulama* and destroyed their libraries as well as the agricultural stocks of the local people through punitive raids in 1771.[17] As a consequence of this persecution, multiple Shi'ite uprisings took place in Jabal Amil. In the nineteenth century, the Shi'ites revolted against Egyptian rule, but the uprising failed to bring them any political rights and so their socio-political conditions remained unchanged until the Civil War of 1860 in Mount Lebanon.

Meanwhile, the defeat of Muhammad-Ali Pasha's Egyptian forces in 1840 gave the Ottoman Empire full control over Mount Lebanon.[18] Subsequently, there had been a rise in the level of hostilities between the Maronites and the Druze, and this led to three sectarian wars in 1841, 1845, and 1860.[19] However,

in 1842, the Ottomans divided the region of Mount Lebanon into two sectors (or *Qaim'maqamiyyah*), "the northern one was inhabited mainly by Maronites and other Christians and was ruled by a Maronite, and the southern one was ruled by a Druze although there were a lot of Maronites in it."[20] Soon after the end of the third Civil War of 1860, the great powers of the time, including the Sublime Porte, France, Britain, Austria, Prussia, and Russia, signed in June 1861 the Reglement Organique, which established the *mutasarrifiyyah* in Mount Lebanon.[21] Great powers' influence and interference continued. For instance, the Maronites were fully supported and backed by the French, the Druze by the British, the Catholics by the Austrians, and the Greek Orthodox by the Russians. However, the Shi'ites remained without any support. Soon after, the Ottoman governor created what was known as "The Administrative Council" which represented all the sects in the *Mutasarrifiyya*. Since then, Lebanon has been governed under a formula that distributed government and administrative jobs among its sects. The Shi'ite role, however, remained very limited, and the *Mutasarrifiyya* did not include the main Shi'ite region of Jabal Amil. Despite these reforms, the Shi'ites were deprived of their civil and religious rights under the Ottomans. Once again, the Shi'ites felt that their religious identity was revoked, and they "had to observe the mourning rituals in secret; by 1918, the Ottoman soldiers were stationed at the entrance to mosques and *husayniyyas* to prevent public commemoration of the Imam Husayn's martyrdom."[22]

It is worthy of note that the Shi'ites played a significant role in resisting the Ottomans throughout the Ottoman presence in Lebanon. This resistance took different forms and gradually organized social and political movements toward the end of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This reaction against the Ottoman rule was normal. It is possible to argue that the early Shi'ite search for their political identity began to develop and shaped itself through communal involvement in various Arab movements and groups. Those movements and groups worked first in secret and later in public to end the Ottoman rule. The main secret movement, *al-Arabiya al-Fatat* (the Arab Youth), was formed in Paris in 1911 and had a major impact on the (Arab) national movement.[23] The Shi'ites worked keenly through these groups, participating in conventions and conferences, including the Arab Convention in Paris in June 1913. Alongside these movements, there was a substantial rise of local papers and magazines, notably in Jabal Amil. The oldest and main one was *al-Irfan* magazine, established by Ahmad Aref al-Zein in February 1909, and was followed by many others such as *al-Morooj* magazine in 1909 (established by As'ad Rahaal) and *Jabal Amil* newspaper in 1911 (also established by Ahmad Aref al-Zein).[24] All of these publications increased the level of awareness and knowledge among the local people and had a major impact in mobilizing their struggle against the Ottomans.

A major leading figure was Abed al-Karim al-Khalil (1884-1916), who was the founder of *al-Muntada al-Adabi al-Arabi* (the Arab Literary Club) in Istanbul in 1909. By October 1914, he arrived in Nabatieh and formed a local branch of the Arabic Committee, followed by another branch in Sidon.[25] Abed al-Karim al-Khalil planned a revolt against the Ottomans, and after the defeat of Jamal Pasha's first campaign in February 1915, he set the dates of his movement's operations against the Ottomans.[26] The movement he formed did not remain for long as a pro-Ottoman local Shi'ite notable Kamel al-As'ad alerted the Ottomans of the movement's presence, leading to the Ottomans killing most of its members by 1916.[27] It is important to note that the competition increased between Abed al-Karim al-Khalil and Kamel al-As'ad, especially when al-Khalil decided to run for elections as a Shi'i representative of Jabal Amil (in the Ottoman parliament).[28]

The Ottomans began to lose hegemony over the Middle East by the end of World War I. France and Britain signed the Sykes–Picot Agreement in 1916, which was designed not to end the Ottoman hegemony over the Middle East, but simply a method to break down Greater Syria into Syria, Lebanon, and Palestine and to give the mandatory powers full control over these areas after the Ottoman defeat. Consequently, France took over Lebanon and Syria, while Britain established its control over Palestine. It is important to note that during Ottoman rule, there were no defined boundaries that separated Arab territories (in particular, Lebanon from Syria and Palestine). This remained the case until the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the establishment of Greater Lebanon in September 1920. Under Ottoman rule, people living within the borders of the Ottoman empire were able to travel without obstacles or restrictions. In this manner, the Lebanese historian professor Ahmed Beydoun told this researcher that "the people who previously lived within the Ottoman Empire were able to go anywhere without restrictions, they could even reach Serbia and Sarajevo before being questioned where they're coming from?"[29] This remained the case until 1920. Hence, after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, there was a border delineation by the colonial powers. The issue of boundaries became a very serious problem for the local people who were previously living under the Ottomans. Beydoun asserts that the Lebanese–Palestinian borders (of 1920) can be regarded as sectarian borders, i.e., the Shi'i presence ends at these borders with some exceptions.[30]

The Shi'ites during the French Mandate and the Challenge of Greater Lebanon

The French mandate came into effect over Syria and Lebanon during the San Remo conference in April 1920. The Shi'ites rejected the French mandate and the division of Greater Syria.[31] The Shi'ites traced the danger of the mandate, and

for this purpose, they called for a convention at Wadi al-Houjeir. The convention took place on April 24, 1920, to discuss the French mandate and its implications. It was attended by 600 (Shi'i) representatives, including the most significant Shi'i figure, Sayyid Abed al-Hussein Sharafeddine.[32] The Houjeir convention took place a few days after riots in Jabal Amil, mainly in the Tyre district—between locals and some volunteers from Mount Lebanon who belonged to the French Army.[33] The Houjeir convention recommendations backed up the unity of Jabal Amil with the Arab Republic (Greater Syria) and rejected the division of Greater Syria.[34] However, the Houjeir convention could not stop the French from dividing Greater Syria. The friction between the Shi'ites—mainly the Shi'ites of Jabal Amil—and the French mandatory powers became intense.

In September 1920, the French High Commissioner and Commander-in-Chief in Syria, General Gouraud, announced the establishment of Greater Lebanon, in which the Beqa' and Jabal Amil as well as the coastal cities were attached to the *Mutasarrifiyya* of Mount Lebanon.[35] The Shi'ites of Jabal Amil opposed this unification of Mount Lebanon with the areas of the South and at a later stage rose up against the policy as they held a greater affinity to the areas outside the newly established state. For example, "many Amili Shi'a considered the Port of Haifa their main town because of its economic importance to them."[36] More than that, "until the late eighteenth century, South Lebanon was part of a production and trade circuit centred on the Port of Akka and including Northern Galilee, while Beqa' Shi'ites sold pastoral produce in Syria."[37] Because the ties that bound Jabal Amil and the Beqa' with parts of Southern Syria and Northern Palestine were stronger and formed two well-integrated commercial network centers for trade, Palestinian currency predominated in Jabal Amil until 1942.[38] Because of those ties, the Shi'ites political orientation was directed toward the unity of Greater Syria, and for these reasons, the Shi'ites strongly fought the French mandate while the Maronite-dominated independent Lebanese state was being established.

The Shi'ites after the 1943 National Pact

Modern Lebanon was formed in 1943 as the basis of an unwritten political formula between Riyad al-Sulh (Sunni) and Bishara al-Khouri (Maronite), namely, the National Pact of 1943 (*al-Mithaq al-Watani*). The emergence of the confessional political system in Lebanon (because of the nature of the 1943 National Pact) was in favor of both the Maronite and the Sunnis, who harvested the majority of the civil servant jobs, along with the presidency (Maronites) and the premiership (Sunnis). However, "in 1947 following protests by the Shi'a deputies, the chair of the speaker of parliament was confirmed a Shi'a post."[39] In addition, the Shi'ites had not been able to play a momentous role in drawing the political path of the

Lebanese system during the National Pact 1943 period, and this explains their political instability at that time.[40] Beydoun elaborated more on this issue when he argued that

> the reason the Shi'ites were not able to play any significant role during that time (the independence period) was because they were separated and not (politically) united in so far as they had various and competitive leaderships (zuama). There was also the geographical factor and the geographical distance between the two (main) Shi'i groups of Lebanon, i.e. the Shi'ites of Jabal Amil and the Shi'ites of the Beqa'. This in fact played a role in fragmenting the Shi'i community (and the Shi'i political identity).[41]

On the demographic scale, it is important to note that the Shi'ites of Lebanon constituted 19.6 percent of the entire Lebanese population and as such were the third largest minority within Lebanon according to the 1932 official census.[42] There has been no official census of the population in Lebanon since 1932 due to the fear of destabilizing the Lebanese political system. The following table shows the major Lebanese sects with their population percentage at that time.

Relative size of Lebanese communities according to the 1932 census[43]

Communities	Number	Percentage
Maronites	227,800	28.7%
Greek Orthodox	77,312	9.7%
Greek Catholics	46,709	5.9%
Other Christians	44,929	5.7%
Sunnis	178,130	22.4%
Shi'is	155,035	19.6%
Druzes	53,334	6.7%
Others	10,181	1.3%
Total	793,426	100%

Soon after Lebanese independence in 1943, the Shi'ites of Southern Lebanon suffered another challenge when Israel occupied their border villages and farms in 1948. The problem of the border villages and farms dates back to the early years of the British colonial occupation in Palestine and the French colonial occupation in Lebanon.[44] From that time onward, the Shi'ites became the victims of both the neglect of their government and the repeated Israeli retaliations and aggressions. A series of massacres were carried out by Israel in 1948, particularly at the border Lebanese villages such as Hula. Petran notes that in 1948 "the Israeli army immediately occupied twenty-two Lebanese villages and permanently annexed eight of them, shifting the Israeli frontier in some sections up to 200 meters further into Lebanon."[45] It is worth noting that between 1949 and 1964 alone, there were around 140 Israeli aggressions against the Lebanese territories.[46]

More than that, between 1968 and 1974, that is, between the rise of Palestinian resistance in Lebanon and until the eve of the Lebanese Civil War, the Lebanese authorities reported 3,000 Israeli aggressions against Lebanon that led to the death of 880 Lebanese and Palestinians.[47] This had a direct impact on the Shi'ites located in Southern Lebanon and forced a gradual exodus to Beirut, creating extensive social problems.

The 1956, Suez War had a huge impact on the Middle East and directly affected the Lebanese domestic politics. Once again, the Lebanese were divided into pro-Western (represented by president Camille Chamoun) and pro-Nasserists (represented mainly by the Sunni and Shi'ite Muslims). This division was associated with a power shift after the fall of Abdullah al-Yafi's and Sa'ib Salam's pro-Nasser governments and the establishment of the new pro-Western government in November 1956 under Premier Sami al-Sulh. Al-Sulh's government adopted the Eisenhower Doctrine in early 1957, which "pledged economic and military support to the Middle Eastern countries that were willing to protect themselves from Soviet expansion."[48] In other words, the Doctrine gave the US the "right" to intervene militarily in the Middle East, upon a request from a Middle Eastern country's president. The Eisenhower Doctrine was implemented right after the 1958 Iraqi coup.[49] Parallel to the Iraqi coup, Lebanon entered a new stage of instability, beginning in May 1958, and led to civil war, mainly in the major Lebanese cities. Shi'ite grievances, among many issues, were displayed significantly in the crisis. In the wake of these events, US Marines landed in Lebanon in mid-July 1958.[50] The request came from the Lebanese president Camille Chamoun who called the US Marines to stop the pro-Nasserist uprising. On July 31, Lebanese Army Commander Fouad Chehab was elected president for a 6-year term.[51] The civil war ended by mid-August 1958.

Parallel to the above-mentioned events, the Shi'ite areas of Baalback-Hermel and Jabal Amil remained undeveloped and experienced both poverty and neglect by the government. Those conditions facilitated the internal migration of Shi'i families from their areas to Beirut. For example, according to Munzer Jaber, Shi'ite migration from Southern Lebanon to Beirut increased five times between 1943 and 1973/1974; more specifically it went from 6 percent to 29 percent during that period.[52] The main causes of this rapid increase in migration had been the continuous Israeli hostilities against Southern Lebanon since 1948 and government economic and political neglect of the Shi'ite rural areas. Even in Beirut, the Shi'ites lived around the center in underprivileged circumstances, forming poverty belts around Beirut, mainly in the Southern suburbs of the capital. They worked as garbage collectors, beggars, and toilers and were often members of the radical and leftist organizations.[53] Moreover, the Shi'ites' presence in Beirut played the

main role in introducing the community to new circle of social and political movements. The rise of the left-wing parties and Palestinian movements during the 1960s gave a new prospect to the Shi'ites who joined these parties. For example, a predominant number of Shi'ites became affiliated to various secular political parties and movements ranging from the Lebanese Communist Party (LCP) and the Organization of Communist Action (OCA) to the Syrian Socialist Nationalist Party (SSNP) as well as the various Palestinians groups and movements,[54] and to confirm how active the Shi'ites were in the LCP, "the LCP membership rose to 50 percent Shi'a, 15 to 20 percent Sunni and Druze, and 30 percent Christian by 1975."[55] It is also important to note that the social circumstances, poverty, and misery affecting the Shi'i community and the absence of the social and political movements and parties within the Shi'i community influenced many Shi'ites to join these left-wing parties and Palestinian movements. These factors inspired the Shi'ites to continue their journey, searching for their political identity. This search was associated with Musa al-Sadr whose presence in Lebanon was a turning point that marked the Shi'ites revival and hastened the change that led to the (re) emergence of the Shi'ite political identity.

Musa al-Sadr and the (Re)Emergence of the Shi'ite Identity

Parallel to the events discussed in the previous section, a major development took place through the arrival of Musa al-Sadr to Lebanon in late 1959,[56] which had a major impact on the Shi'i community of Lebanon and on the (re)emergence of the Shi'i social and political identity. After his scattered years between Iran and Iraq, Musa al-Sadr finally settled in Lebanon in late 1959, and he "found himself in a land that was becoming a favourite battleground for Arab Nationalist movements of all types."[57] Musa al-Sadr's success in mobilizing the Shi'i community was achieved very quickly, and his arrival brought an end to the Shi'ites *status quo*. During that period, the polarization appeared unambiguously between Musa al-Sadr and the Shi'i traditional leadership (*zuama*). Musa al-Sadr was regarded as a potential threat to the *zuama* presence. For instance, Kamel al-As'ad strongly opposed Musa al-Sadr's social and political reform.[58] As the left-wing parties had been attractive to the Shi'ites in the 1960s and 1970s, Kamel al-As'ad countered Musa al-Sadr by forming what became known as the Democratic Socialist Party (DSP) in July 1972.[59] But the DSP remained unpopular inside the Shi'i community and thus became inactive by the late 1970s.

Soon after his arrival to Lebanon, Musa al-Sadr re-structured the local benevolent society (*Jamiyat al-Bir wa al-Ihsan*) in Tyre, which was founded in 1948 by his relative, Sayyid Abed al-Hussein Sharafeddine. Moreover, he formed many social

organizations and established youth clubs that helped the poor and strengthened their stay in their villages and towns and eliminated migration toward Beirut, the capital. Social and political reforms continued through the establishment of the Supreme Islamic Shi'i Council (SISC) in 1967, which served as a functional root for promoting Shi'ite interest. Musa al-Sadr served as the first SISC president until his disappearance in August 1978. The SISC began operating within the Shi'i community and worked for improving the schools and hospitals within the Shi'ite localities as well as distributing some welfare funds. The foundation of the SISC was observed as an advanced step toward political Shi'ism. With respect to the SISC, Musa al-Sadr stated,

> I am the owner of this project; it is the best solution to protect the Shi'ite rights. The council (SISC) is going to help in solving the social problems of the Shi'ites … and the manifestation of the SISC is going to be (through) a school, a hospital, a road, …[60]

Political Shi'ism started to evolve steadily in Lebanon during that time. Between 1970 and 1975, there was a marked process of development that had its impact on the Shi'i community, leading to the foundation of a number of councils and institutions where Musa al-Sadr was directly involved in this process of development. Among these national institutions were the "Council for the South" (*Majlis al-Janoub)* and the "Committee for the Aid of the South" (*Hay'at Nasrat al-Janoub*), both founded in 1970. Those organizations were followed by establishing the "Movement of the Deprived" (*Harakat al-Mahrumin*) in 1974 and the Amal militia in 1975. The most significant was the "Movement of the Deprived." It was established to prevent the segmentation between the Lebanese, to put an end to the unjust laws, to equate the deprived population and their areas with the rest of Lebanon, and, most importantly, to end the *zuama* hegemony over the wealth of the country and its people. It is essential to note that when the "Movement of the Deprived" was formulated, it was not considered as a sectarian movement, i.e., it was not a Shi'i Movement. Through it, Musa al-Sadr aimed to sphere the Lebanese population within a unified module; but the outbreak of the Lebanese Civil War in 1975 fragmented and diverted the objectives of *Harakat al-Mahrumin* from a national and non-sectarian movement to a pure Shi'i movement. This led to the termination of *Harakat al-Mahrumin* role through the emergence of the Amal militia in early July 1975. In short, Musa al-Sadr played a key role in the establishment of these institutions and in (re)shaping the Shi'ite social and political identity. However, Musa al-Sadr's relation with the Palestinians was more problematic, and his worries regarding Southern Lebanon became true when Israel invaded Southern Lebanon in March 1978.

Conclusion

This article concludes that the Shi'i community of Lebanon witnessed a set of events during its history that had a major impact on its social and political identity. The Shi'ite political position remained limited during the Mamluks, the Ottomans, and the French mandate period. The Shi'ites were left rather within the same zone of marginalization due to the lack of their political representation by the Shi'i *zuama.* This fact played a role in Shi'i political fragmentation and affected the development of their political identity. The Shi'ite significant role appeared through resisting the inequalities and unjust laws and procedures, a way to protect their identity from dissolution. Few improvements in the Shi'ite political life began to fertilize after the independence period; it paved the way to foster and reinforce their political identity inside the Lebanese state, but this remained shallow toward strengthening their social and political position. However, the Shi'ites underwent social and political change from the 1960s onward. This change transformed the Shi'ite position from marginal into a significant socio-political power inside Lebanese politics and was associated with the arrival of Musa al-Sadr in Lebanon. In short, the Shi'ites of Lebanon glimpsed the change in their social and political life through Musa al-Sadr. This had been accomplished through the emergence of their institutions, mainly the SISC (1967), and was reinforced further through "*Harakat al-Mahroumin*" (1974) and Amal (1975). It was a long process toward strengthening their social and political identity; arguably, this process was to be affected once again by the Lebanese Civil War in 1975.

Notes

1. Helena Cobban, *The Making of Modern Lebanon* (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1985), p. 19.
2. It is important to note that there has not been any official census in Lebanon since 1932; estimates show that the Shi'i minority is the largest minority in Lebanon. In this manner, Michael Johnson's figures show that the Shi'i community population increased 11.2 percent between 1932 and 1984; specifically it went from 19.6 percent of the population in 1932 to 30.8 percent in 1984. However, the Maronite community of Lebanon was the largest community according to the 1932 census; its population decreased 3.6 percent between 1932 and 1984, specifically from 28.8 percent in 1932 to 25.2 percent in 1984. For more details, see Michael Johnson, *All Honourable Men: The Social Origins of War in Lebanon* (London and New York: Centre for Lebanese Studies in association with I.B. Tauris Publishers, 2001), p. 3. See also in this article the table of the Lebanese population according to the1932 census.
3. The term "Poverty Belts" others call it "Misery Belts" has been commonly used to describe the Shi'i social conditions in the 1950s and 1960s. See, e.g., As'ad Abu-Khalil, "Druze, Sunni and Shiite Political Leadership in Present-Day Lebanon," *Arab Studies Quarterly* 7:4 (Fall 1985), 43; or Roschanack Shaery-Eisenlohr, *Shi'ite Lebanon: Transnational Religion and the Making of National Identities* (New York: Colombia University Press, 2008), p. 31.
4. Majed Halawi, *A Lebanon Defied: Musa al-Sadr and the Shi'a Community* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1992), p. 29.

5. Ferdinand Smit, *The Battle for South Lebanon: The Radicalisation of Lebanon's Shi'ites 1982–1985* (Amsterdam: Bulaaq, 2000), p. 35.
6. Halawi, *A Lebanon Defied*, p. 29.
7. Halawi, *A Lebanon Defied*, p. 29.
8. Amal Saad-Ghorayeb, "Factors Conducive to the Politicization of the Lebanese Shi'a and the Emergence of Hizbu'llah," *Journal of Islamic Studies* 14:3 (2003), 278.
9. Waddah Charara, *Al-Umma al-Qaliqa: Al-Amiliyun wa al-Assabiya al-Amiliya Ala Atabat al-Dawla al-Lubnaniya* (Beirut, Lebanon: Dar al-Nahar, 1996), p. 33.
10. Rosemary Sayigh, *Too Many Enemies: The Palestinian Experience in Lebanon* (London & New Jersey: Zed Books, 1994), p. 158.
11. Sayigh, *Too Many Enemies*, p. 158.
12. Albert Hourani, *Political Society in Lebanon: A Historical Introduction* (Papers on Lebanon, Center for Lebanese Studies, Oxford), p. 6.
13. Rodger Shanahan, *The Shi'a of Lebanon: Clans, Parties and Clerics* (London and New York: Tauris Academic Studies, an imprint of I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd, 2005), p. 15.
14. Kamal S. Salibi, *The Modern History of Lebanon* (Delmar, NY: Caravan Books, 2004), pp. xv-xvi.
15. Salibi, *The Modern History of Lebanon*, p. xvi.
16. Halawi, *A Lebanon Defied*, p. 31.
17. Sayigh, *Too Many Enemies*, p. 158.
18. Muhammad-Ali Pasha's was the ruler of Egypt and Sudan (1805-1848). His official title was *Khedive.* He started attacking the Ottomans through Palestine in 1831. His son Ibrahim Pasha was leading the troops and then became the ruler of Mount Lebanon between 1832 and 1840. Muhammad-Ali's role in Mount Lebanon terminated in October 1840. Since then the Ottomans took full control over the territory of Mount Lebanon. See Bingbing Wu, "Shi'ite Collective Identity and the Construction of the Nation-State of Lebanon," *Journal of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies (in Asia)* 3:4 (2009), 53-64.
19. Wu, Shi'ite Collective Identity and the Construction, 54.
20. Wu, Shi'ite Collective Identity and the Construction, 54. See also Hanna Ziadeh, *Secterianism and Inter-communal Nation-Building in Lebanon* (London: Hurst & Company, 1st ed., 2006), p. 57.
21. Wu, "Shi'ite Collective Identity and the Construction," p. 54.
22. Joseph Olmert, "The Shi'is and the Lebanese State," cited in Martin Kramer, ed., *Shi'ism, Resistance and Revolution* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1987), p. 192.
23. Nawal Fayyad, *Safahat Min Tarikh Jabal Amil fi al-Ahdayn al-Uthmani wa al-Faranci* (Beirut, Lebanon: Dar al-Jadeed, 1998), p. 32.
24. Jihad Bannout, *Harakat al-Nidal fi Jabal Amil* (Beirut, Lebanon: Dar al-Mizan, 1993), pp. 162-163.
25. Fayyad, *Safahat Min Tarikh Jabal Amil fi al-Ahdayn al-Uthmani wa al-Faranci*, p. 34. See also Muhammad Jaber Al'Safa, *Tarikh Jabal Amil* (Beirut, Lebanon: Dar al-Nahar, 4th ed., 2004), pp. 211-212.
26. Sabrina Mervin, *Harakat al-Islah al-Shi'i: U'lama Jabal Amil min Nihayat al-Dawla al-Osmaniya ila Bidayat al-Istiklal*, translated by Haytham al-Amein (Beirut, Lebanon: Dar al-Nahar, 2003), p. 406.
27. For more information see Mervin, *Harakat al-Islah al-Shi'i*, pp. 407-411.
28. Al'Safa, *Tarikh Jabal Amil*, pp. 213-215.
29. Ahmed Beydoun, Interview by the author in Arabic. Beirut, Tuesday, 9 January, 2007.
30. Ahmed Beydoun, Interview by the author in Arabic. Beirut, Tuesday, 9 January, 2007.
31. Ali Rafiq al-Mousawi, "Al-Shi'a wa al-Uruba fi Lubnan (2): Dawra'hom fi al-Mashrouh al-Nassiri wa al-Moq'awama al-Falistiniya," *al-Safir Newspaper*, 24 August 1985.
32. Mervin, *Harakat al-Islah al-Shi'i*, p. 425.
33. Mervin, *Harakat al-Islah al-Shi'i*, p. 425.

34. Yasser al-Hariri, "Mina al-Najaf al-Ashraf Wosolan Ela Qom wa Lubnan, Tareikh wa Siyouf wa Fatawa: no 16," *al-Diyar Newspaper*, 30 May 1999.
35. Shanahan, *The Shi'a of Lebanon*, p. 29.
36. Shanahan, *The Shi'a of Lebanon*, p. 29.
37. Sayigh, *Too Many Enemies*, p. 158.
38. Halawi, *A Lebanon Defied*, p. 40.
39. Halawi, *A Lebanon Defied*, p. 97.
40. Ali Fayyad, Interview by the author in Arabic. Beirut, Thursday, 14 July 2005.
41. Ahmed Beydoun, Interview by the author in Arabic. Beirut, Tuesday, 9 January 2007.
42. Elizabeth Picard, *Lebanon: A Shattered Country—Myths and Realities of the Wars in Lebanon* (New York: Holmes & Meier Publishers, Inc., rev. ed., 2002), p. 66.
43. Picard, *Lebanon: A Shattered Country*, p. 66.
44. Here we can use the term "colonial occupation" as it was an occupation and not a mandate; later this occupation became known as the mandate, so specifically it goes back to the period between 1920 and 1948.
45. Tabitha Petran, *The Struggle over Lebanon* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1987), p. 66.
46. Amin Mustafa, *Al-Muqawama fi Lubnana 1948-2000* (Beirut, Lebanon: Dar al-Hadi, 1st ed., 2003), p. 116.
47. Mustafa, *Al-Muqawama fi Lubnana 1948-2000*, p. 127.
48. Omri Nir, "The Shi'ites during the 1958 Lebanese Crises," *Middle Eastern Studies* 40:6 (November 2004), 110.
49. B. J. Odeh, *Lebanon: Dynamics of Conflict* (London: Zed Books, 1985), p. 6.
50. Odeh, *Lebanon: Dynamics of Conflict*, p. 6.
51. See President Fouad Chehab official website: http://www.fouadchehab.com/en.
52. Munzer Jaber, *Al-Sharit al-Lubnani al-Muhtall: Masalik al-Ihtilal, Masarat al-Muwajaha, Masa'ir al-Ahali* [The Occupied Lebanese Border Strip: The Paths of Occupation, the Lines of Confrontation, the Fate of the Population] (Beirut, Lebanon: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1999), p. 520.
53. As'ad Abu-Khalil, "Druze, Sunni and Shiite Political Leadership in Present-Day Lebanon," 43.
54. Augustus Richard Norton, *Hizbullah of Lebanon: Extremist Ideas vs. Mundane Politics* (New York: Council of Foreign Relations, 1999), pp. 6-8.
55. Halawi, *A Lebanon Defied*, p. 106.
56. Musa al-Sadr was born in Qom, Iran, on March 15, 1928, to a family that originated from Lebanon. He spent the early periods of his life in Iran and Iraq. He moved to Najaf in Iraq in 1954; in 1955, he visited Lebanon for the first time where he met his Lebanese relatives in Tyre and Chour. In 1957, he accepted the invitation of his relative Sayyid Abed al-Hussein Sharafeddine and visited Lebanon again. Musa al-Sadr's years in Najaf were associated with lack of financial support, mainly after the death of his father, and these financial problems can be linked to his decision to move to Lebanon. Shortly before his arrival to Lebanon, in summer 1958, Musa al-Sadr had to leave Iraq and return to Iran in the wake of the 1958 (Iraqi) *coup d'etat.* He did not stay for long in Iran, and thus in November 1959 Musa al-Sadr left Iran back to Najaf and remained there for a few weeks; (in Najaf) Ayatollah Muhsin al-Hakim urged Musa al-Sadr to accept the standing invitation to go to Tyre in South Lebanon. For further information about his life see Saqir Youssef Saqir, *Al' Al-Sadr wa Usulahom wa A'lamahom*, pp. 10-12, cited in *The Vanished Imam Musa al-Sadr Encyclopedia*, vol. 1 (Beirut, Lebanon: Edito Creps International, 2007). See also H. E. Chehabi and Majid Tafreshi, *Musa Sadr and Iran*, pp. 143-151, citied in H. E. Chehabi, ed., *Distance Relations: Lebanon and Iran in the Last 500 Years* (New York and London: Centre for Lebanese Studies in association with I.B. Tauris Publishers, 2006).
57. Vali Nasr, *The Shi'a Revival: How Conflicts within Islam Will Shape the Future* (New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company Ltd, 2006), pp. 110-111.

58. Kamel al-As'ad (1932-2010) is a *zaim* from the village of Taibeh in Southern Lebanon. To differentiate, Kamel al-As'ad is the relative of the pro-Ottoman zaim Kamel al-As'ad whose name appeared earlier in this article.
59. Shanahan, *The Shi'a of Lebanon*, pp. 76-77.
60. Soubhi Munzir Yaghi, "Sab'a wa Ishruna Aman Ala Taghyeib al-Imam Musa al-Sadr, Mouasis al-Majlis al-Islami al-Shi'i al-A'la wa Harakat Amal," *al-Nahar Newspaper*, 31 August 2005.